

Serial No. 10/015,740

05004273.001US1

**Remarks**

The Final Office Action dated December 18, 2003 has been carefully considered. After such consideration, Claims 1 and 4 have been amended in the present Amendment. As such, Claims 1-9 remain in the case with none being allowable.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present amendment complies with 37 CFR 1.116 as the claims, if amended as proposed, would avoid any of the rejections set forth in the Final Office Action dated December 18, 2003, and thus the amendment would place the case in condition for allowance or in better condition for appeal. Further, the claims as amended present no new issues requiring further consideration and search. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the entry of the present amendment is proper.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action also rejects all of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Zighelboim (U.S. Pat. No. 5,366,732). Zighelboim discloses a method of preparing, treating, and then milking cows. First, the teats and udder are washed with an aqueous soap solution. The teats and udder are then *manually* massaged as they are dried with a moisture-activated wipe. The wipe includes an antimicrobial agent that is released when the wipe absorbs moisture. Thereafter, the teats are milked.

The present invention, on the other hand, discloses a procedure for milking animals wherein the teats are sequentially stimulated and milked. Sequential stimulation by a machine is advantageous over manual stimulation because mechanical stimulation provides consistent and controlled stimulation. The control and consistency of manual stimulation, on the other hand, is likely to vary depending upon several factors. For example, the force

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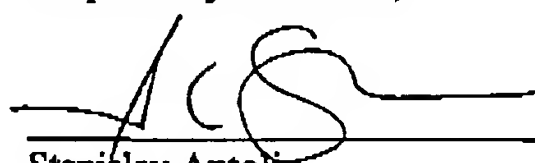
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exerted by the attendant's hand may vary depending on how tired the attendant is or how many animals' teats the attendant has already stimulated that day. Such inconsistent stimulation may have adverse effects on the milking process.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite that in the method for milking animals in accordance with the present invention, the teats are sequentially stimulated *by a machine*. The independent claim, as amended, is patentable over Zighelboim. Dependent claims 2-9 are patentable for the same reasons regarding the independent claim.

In light of the amendment and remarks presented herein, Applicant submits that Claims 1-9 of the case are in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully requests such action. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's counsel at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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